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A VERY GOOD INVESTMENT-A HOME IN RANDALL COUNTY.

Sherman's Coup at Savannah

A FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY WAR STORY

December 13, 1864

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SHERMAN'S march to the sea came to an end early in December, 1864, and the first problem to settle was the establishment of a base on the coast to sustain his army. Savannah was the most suitable port, but was in the hands of the Confederates. General W. J. Hardee held the city with a force of 18,000 men. The Confederates were not certain as to Sherman's plans or movements after he reached the coast, but assumed that he would turn northward and strike the rear of Lee on James river. For this reason it was decided not to make a stubborn fight to hold Savannah in case he should surround it, but that Hardee should withdraw his troops and unite them with other Confederate forces in the Carolinas to dispute Sherman's march northward.

The city of Savannah is built upon a sandy plateau about forty feet above tide in Savannah river. Sherman approached it from the south across territory cut up with little streams tributary to the Ogeechee river. His troops closed in on Dec. 12 so as to form a line from the Ogeechee to the Savannah above the city. Hardee prepared to defend the place and assigned his troops and commanders to the most important points. His batteries consisted of about 100 guns, half of them of heavy caliber.

The principal work to be attacked was Fort McAllister, situated at General's Point, on the southern bank of the Ogeechee river, and commanding the channel of approach from Ossabaw sound and also covering the bridge of the Gulf railway across the river. It was a heavy earthwork, with its principal front toward the river, which it was intended to defend. The armament consisted of seven heavy guns in permanent position and eight light field guns. The river all around was planted with torpedoes, and sub-torpedo shells had been planted on the land approaches to the fort. The land defenses were strengthened by palisades and abatis. The garrison of Fort McAllister at the time of Sherman's attack numbered about 200 men, under command of a major. On the approach

army foraging bands had brought in but scant supplies. The first task was to get in touch with Federal transports on Ossabaw sound. A Federal scouting officer passed Fort McAllister by night in a canoe and succeeded in reaching the friendly fleet in the sound. However, it would be impossible to make use of the Ogeechee to bring the transports close to camp until Fort McAllister was in Sherman's hands. The Federal cavalry under General Kilpatrick attempted to reach the fleet along the roads leading through the swamps seaward, but had failed. Kilpatrick also attempted to take the fort by surprise, but this also failed, and Sherman ordered General O. O. Howard, whose command lay nearest the work, to send a force sufficient to carry the place by storm at the first dash. This would involve the least loss of life. Howard sent the division of General W. B. Hazen to do the work, and after a circuitous march it reached the front of the fort about noon on the 13th of December.

In order to prevent re-enforcements from reaching the fort from the Confederate line at Savannah proper General Howard planted two guns upon a hill about two miles from the rear of the work. Near the battery was a rice mill which stood close to the river bank and commanded a view of the fort, the river and the sound. Howard used the mill for a signal station, and while Hazen was marching forward to the attack he and Sherman looked on and communicated by signal.

General Hazen's advance guard captured a picket about a mile from the fort and got from him the particulars about the torpedoes buried in the road leading to the fort. These were removed, and a brigade of troops moved forward to within half a mile of the work. The commander of the brigade wished to dash ahead at once, but General Hazen decided to wait until portions of three brigades could be brought into position. The reserves and supports found difficulty in getting forward without drawing the enemy's fire, and it was 5 o'clock before the signal for attack could be given.

Luck favored Hazen's enterprise from the very start. The discovery of the torpedoes saved his line from heavy casualties and possibly from panic, for hidden foes are a terror to the bravest men. It happened also that just before the attack the garrison had added an abatis to the defenses on the land side of the fort by felling large trees and cutting the limbs, which when sharpened formed a hedge of wooden bayonets in the pathway of the assailants. But the attack came before they had time to remove the large trunks of the trees, and these gave good cover to Hazen's skirmishers, enabling them to get close to the fort and pick off the Confederate gunners. In this way the guns of the fort were rendered useless.

While Sherman and Howard impatiently watched the proceedings on Hazen's line from their perch upon the rice mill a tugboat from the fleet sneaked along under shelter of the river bank to communicate with the Federal commander. As the sun was going down Sherman signaled Hazen to hurry the charge, and just then the captain of the tug hailed Sherman to ask if the fort had been taken. Sherman answered, "Not yet, but it will be in a minute."

The gallant dash of Hazen's men quickly fulfilled Sherman's promise. There was a short, sharp struggle on the parapet, and then detachments from all sides poured into the fort. So swiftly did the line move that no halt was apparent either at the abatis, the palisades or the ditch. The ground on the outer edge of the ditch had been planted with Confederate torpedoes, and there the assailants lost heavily, about 200 men killed and wounded. This method of defense, barbaric as it seemed, is permissible by the usages of war. A further stroke of luck favored the attacking party at the right time. The extreme flanks of the works extended to the water, and the palisade had been constructed with a view to



"NOT YET, BUT IT WILL BE IN A MINUTE." of Sherman General Hardee had supplied the work with fifty days' rations to enable the men to stand a siege in case the work should be isolated. It was located about fifteen miles from the city of Savannah.

During the last few days of Sherman's march the troops had been on short rations. Breadstuffs were scarce in the country passed through, and the

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Good Lye, 7 cans for.....	25cts.
Vinegar, per Gallon.....	25cts.
Fancy Prunes, 25 lb box for.....	\$1.00
Fancy Apricots, 25 lb box for.....	\$2.75
Fancy Evaporated Apples for.....	7½cts
Choice Evaporated Peaches, per lb.....	10cts
Chewing and Smoking Tobacco, per lb.....	25cts

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high tide. At the moment of attack the tide was out, and Hazen's soldiers passed safely around the obstructions on a dry beach. In fifteen minutes after the charge was sounded the Confederate flag came down. The garrison made no formal surrender, but individuals ceased to struggle when they found themselves overpowered. The Confederate loss in killed and wounded was forty-eight in all. Sherman sent dispatches by the tug to Admiral Dahlgren, whose fleet lay off the coast, and went himself by steamer next day to confer with the navy about removing obstructions to the channel of the Ogeechee to enable transports to bring supplies to camp. A dispatch steamer which was with the fleet brought instructions from Grant to Sherman directing him to move his army by water to the James river and aid in the attack on Richmond.

Sherman decided to capture Savannah in any event on the 17th of December and sent to General Hardee a demand for the surrender of the city. This demand was refused, and Sherman prepared to lay siege. Hardee had no intention of remaining until he was shut in by overwhelming forces, and Sherman, fearing that the foe would escape, sailed away to Hilton Head, up the coast from the mouth of the Savannah river, where there was a large force of Federal troops. Supposing that Hardee would attempt to go north to Charleston, he hoped to interpose a force in South Carolina to cut off the retreat.

Meanwhile Hardee got out of the net, safely removing his troops and light artillery, and made his way to Charleston unopposed. When Sherman got back to the lines on Dec. 23 he found his troops occupying Savannah. His telegram to Washington announcing the capture was made public on Christmas eve and led to great rejoicing, although the escape of Hardee was a disappointment to the army. Sherman said that when Hardee refused to surrender the city there was no way out but a bloody assault or the complete investment of the place, and while he was occupied in efforts to close the last avenue the enemy slipped out. GEORGE L. KILMER.

In Memory of Velma Campbell.

Little Velma has gone to rest,
God called her home, he thought it best.
She has gone to heaven above,
To prove a blessed Savior's love.
Her little sister went before,
To live with angels ever more;
And there with small white hands they stand—
Beckoning from that beautiful land.
Oh! parents do not weep again,
Your darling is free from pain and sin;
At heaven's gate you may meet ere long,
And sing the everlasting song.
—KATIE GATWOOD.

Edgar Money returned Thursday of last week from a visit to old friends at Beeville, Texas. While gone he also, to use his own expression, saw "ancient history at Monterey, Mexico." Ask him about his travels and what he thinks of the Southern cow country.

M. H. and J. H. Waller were among those in town Saturday who hauled lumber for building the new Baptist church west of the Gilleland school house. After unloading and while on the return home, J. H. Waller's team ran away, wrecking the wagon and leaving one horse with a broken leg. Mr. Waller's injuries are two or three broken toes.

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